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News

For Immediate Release

USDA Rewards the Best

Colchester, VT, July 25, 2005 – Eleven farmers who lead the way for producers in Vermont in voluntary land stewardship are being rewarded for their efforts, it was announced today. Under USDA's Conservation Security Program (CSP), a program that 'rewards the best and motivates the rest,' these farmers are being offered contracts that translate into more than \$103,000 each year for conservation commitments for the next five to ten years, depending on their level of participation.

"CSP participants are conservation innovators. What they do today will lead to additional environmental benefits for the nation as they share their knowledge of conservation with others," said Vermont Assistant State Conservationist Pedro Ramos. "The program is offered nationally on working lands rewarding the nation's leading conservationists and providing incentives for them and others to do more."

(more)

The CSP contracts offered cover about 3,667 acres of agricultural land in the West River and Otter Creek Watersheds. Environmental enhancement activities offered by applicants include improving soil quality, water quality, wildlife habitat management, nutrient and pest management, air quality management and on-farm energy management.

CSP is a voluntary conservation program offered along watershed boundaries that supports ongoing stewardship of private agriculture lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. NRCS financial and technical assistance promotes the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes.

CSP will be available each year on a rotational basis in as many watersheds as funding allows. Additional information on CSP, including the self-assessment workbook and Federal Register notice, is at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>.

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